

# IF ONLY I LEARNED TO DANCE

## *When I Was Little*

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It rained occasionally before dusk in the months of February-March 2020. I decided to arrive early to the pre-show of the Women's March Bali on March 8, 2020 at Rumah Sanur.

"Tonight's topic of discussion is quite interesting, about equality for trans women," said my partner, who was on duty as part of the organizing committee.

At 14.00, the venue still looked deserted. Chairs were arranged facing the stage, and the meeting room on the east side of the building was prepared to take blood samples. The Women's March Bali committee in collaboration with the Gaya Dewata Foundation held HIV/AIDS Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) before the discussion began. "Have a seat," a tall, thin man wearing a red shirt with the Yayasan

man wearing a red shirt with the Yayasan Gaya Dewata logo emblazoned on his chest, welcomed me after I registered for VCT, "My name is Meghan."

After collecting some data regarding my identity, Meghan led me to a table in the corner of the room to draw some of my blood. Afterward, I moved to a chair in the east of the room, and answered some questions in a questionnaire. I could see Meghan greeting incoming people with a friendly smile.

VCT services ended 30 minutes before the discussion started. Meghan rushed to the toilet to get dressed, put on a wig, and change. That night, she and Melati were speakers in the discussion 'Trans Women, Are We Equal Yet?'



Meghan (middle) and Melati (right) as speakers in the discussion “Trans women, Are We Equal Yet?”

Issues about trans women rights were added into the Women’s March Bali event in its 3rd year of running. Meghan talked about the violence and discrimination experienced by trans women in Bali as well as strategies to be accepted by their families.

“If we have our own income and can financially support our family, the family will learn to accept it bit by bit,” she said while sharing about her profession as a Drag Queen.

Meghan was born in 1990 and grew up in a quiet village in Jembrana, Bali. She lives with her mother and father. According to her, little Meghan was a quiet child who was not too interested in playing except with her girl friends who live nearby.

### **Meghan’s Childhood and the absence of Sanggar (youth groups)**

“Since elementary school, I had one talent. I was very effeminate, my bones were soft,” she said, sharing her childhood stories while occasionally laughing.

At that time, there was no specific sanggar near her house in Jembrana for Meghan to practice dancing. She more often turned on the radio or black and white television when her parents were not home, looking for shows that played fast paced songs. Sometimes she deliberately played the traditional music channel so that she could sway with the sash that she secretly took from her mother’s drawer.

Since childhood, children in many areas of Bali are already familiar with the arts, especially dance, theater and traditional music. Before every big traditional ceremony or arts festival held by different banjar/villages, the bale's are all filled with teenagers eagerly practicing gamelan and dance. At the sanggar, children can learn both masculine and feminine dance (regardless of gender), or both.

The experience of dancing from an early age is often used by trans women and cross-dressing dancers to justify their activities to the family. I remember a conversation with Erika Hanita, a Drag Queen who often appears with Meghan. Erika is from Denpasar and has been actively dancing since elementary school. "I'm going to dance, mom," she replied every time she was asked about the make-up and drag clothes by her mother. The same excuses were used by Kartono Yasa, the actor of Liku (an eccentric female character often played by cross-dressed men or trans women in Arja drama dance). His involvement in the sanggar was used as a pretext to get blessings from his mother before he decided to become a professional Liku actor. "Liku actors only use make-up and appear as women on stage. Like me, I only dance as a female in the sanggar. Outside of that, they can be what they want to be," replied Kartono every time his mother showed disagreement.

Arya, the program manager of Yayasan Gaya Dewata (YGD), agrees to this. I interviewed him in November 2020, and of all volunteers who are or have been active in YGD, trans women and cross-dressing dancers who learned to dance from an early age are more likely to be open with their families. They become more expressive and have symbolic/cultural assets in the form of their roles as artists.

"They definitely are more valued; if there is a banjar event or religious ceremony, they will be called to perform. If there is a festival, they would be invited to represent the banjar or village."

One time little Meghan listened to the radio, her body swaying to the music. She took off her T-shirt wrapped it around her head in a bun, as if it was long hair as precious as a crown. She took a sarong from her father's closet, wrapped it around her body tightly, and smiled into the mirror in front of the wooden closet, "I feel so beautiful."

As the music grew louder, Meghan danced to the rhythm. She was sure that her parents would not return any time soon, and all the doors were locked tightly. Singing loudly and imagining herself performing in front of a group of concert goers, Meghan waved her sash to the left and right. Her feet danced,

bringing her body closer to a pot inside the house, “When the pot fell, I was terrified not because of the pot, but of the possibility that my father knew I liked dancing.” Meghan nervously returned the sash and sarong to their original places, put on her T-shirt again, picked up the pieces of the broken pot and checked the door, hoping that no one was watching. “If I had a place to learn dance, I would be agile by now and I wouldn't have to hide!”

### **“So I’m not the only one who is a sissy!”**

A year after graduating from high school, Meghan decided to travel to Denpasar. She was not even 20 years old at the time. Hoping to expand her knowledge and learn how to socialize, she stayed at her older sibling’s house in Denpasar for a few months before deciding to rent a room in the Tuban, Badung area. Her first jobs were a minimarket keeper, and occasionally being an MC with her adopted sibling for a motorbike promotion event.

When she first moved into her boarding room in Tuban, a feminine man approached her. This man was often bored because he lived there with his parents. He looked happy when Meghan arrived, “Because we were both flirty, we connected.”

With the guidance and companionship of her new friend, Meghan visited many different meeting points for the queer community in Bali. For the queer community who have been discriminated against, a safe space is a necessity. Meeting new friends who are open minded and of the same expression made Meghan feel like she wasn’t alone.

“Immediately, I thought: oh, so I’m not the only one in the world who is like this,” she said in between laughter.

Meghan’s new friends are regulars at many bars in Bali. She began to be accustomed to the night life. When she saw a Drag Queen doing lip sync while dancing, her enthusiasm to dance got more ignited. Her friends were always very entertained every time Meghan started dancing on the bar table, imitating the drag queen who had just performed.

In 2011, while working, Meghan received a phone call. She was instructed to come the next day for a rehearsal. She was confused because she had never promised to perform at any event during that week, “I have sent all the information via SMS,” said the person at the other end of the phone, ending the conversation.

*Please attend the dress rehearsal for the Baby Drag Queen, Miss Independent event tomorrow at 3pm at BJ.*

After seeing her enthusiastically impersonate Drag Queens, some of Meghans' friends believed that she had potential. They secretly registered her for the Baby Drag Queen Miss Independent contest held by BJ, one of the gay bars in Bali. "At the time I was confused, nervous, but I still believed in myself because I had seen other Drag Queens perform before," said Meghan explaining her feelings after being contacted by the committee.

Meghan asked for permission to go home early on rehearsal day. She came to the venue with only an 'I'm ready' attitude. After queuing up with the other participants, she met with the stage manager and was confused when asked the title of the song she wanted to perform.

"I thought for a moment before answering, the Rihanna song, Russian Roulette."

The participants of the competition were required to bring their own mp3 disks. CD/DVD players were prepared by the committee.

Meghan asked permission to go outside to Jalan Basangkasa, not far from the venue, to look for Rihanna's mp3 disk. After finding one with an affordable price tag, Meghan was soon back at the rehearsal venue with a disk containing Rihanna's songs.

Meghan's adoptive siblings and the MC were enthusiastic when they found out about the

performance. They gathered their dangdut singer acquaintances to help with make-up and lend her their clothes. On the day of the performance, Meghan arrived early, still unsure about what was going to happen. She sat in the waiting room watching bypassers. Her make-up was thinner than the other participants, and her stage costume too minimalist.

There were 9 other participants who attended that day. After memorizing song lyrics and thinking of dance moves suitable for Russian Roulette, she sat down, waiting for the show to begin. Ayubie Tsunami, one of the senior drag queens, observed Meghan as she walked into the venue.

"Are you taking part in the competition? With make-up and clothes like that?" Ayubie asked, eyeing Meghan's *dangdut* style outfit, "Whose song are you going to sing?"

"Rihanna, sis."

Ayubie led Meghan to the second floor, where the senior drag queens can do their make-up. Within minutes, the make-up was wiped clean off Meghan's face. Ayubie started working with her make-up kit, outlining some contours on her nose, chin and cheeks. After finishing the make-up, Ayubie approached her drag queen friends to lend Meghan some clothes that would suit Rihanna's song.



Meghan posing as Miss Philippine in the Miss World Competition at BJ, 2015 (Meghan's personal documentation)

That night was her first attempt to perform on stage. She was ecstatic to see the complete Rihanna- esque make-up and costume. Her MC and dangdut friends were there shouting encouragement. The jury frowned several times at her rigid movements, flat humour and clumsy articulation. Meghan's first experience wearing 17cm high heels made her gestures less lithe.

Winning wasn't the goal for Meghan when she decided to compete. The jury didn't put her through to the next round, but they did give her the opportunity to go for the auditions that were held every week. In order to reach our dreams, we need to start with the very first step.

From the year 2006 up until mid 2017, there were still many competitions held every week. BJ held Miss Independent, Drag Queens and other lip sync competitions on a regular basis. They were also known for their Miss World, a beauty and intelligence competition.

One of the bar managers said that talent shows like the lip sync competition are part of the bar's attempts to satisfy market demands. Since the opening of BJ in 2009, demand and competition for drag queen performances increased. Bars, restaurants and other entertainment venues competed to hire drag performers to attract customers.

These competitions also become platforms to find new talents so that drag culture can continue to regenerate and be fresh. Young drag queens get the opportunity to perform on stage, get mentorship from their seniors, network with other drag queens and learn all about what it takes to be a drag queen.

### **Drag Culture in Bali, “If Drag Queen can be a source of income and a place to express hidden talent, why not?”**

April 5th, 1987. The death of Edward G. Hop reached national headlines. He was a tourist from the Netherlands who died in Candi Dasa, Bali, after his fight against AIDS. Hop's death was considered the first AIDS casualty in Indonesia.

The team from Tempo magazine with Jim Supangkat as editor brought special coverage to this case with the headline, “AIDS, di Sela Hura-Hura Kuta.” Jim and his team's writing highlighted the need for strict protocol in bars and discotheques to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in the local community. Hangouts and bars that were suspected of being gathering places for the LGBTQ community were among the topics that were widely discussed with a cynical tone. Tempo also published a paper on AIDS in Bali in April 1986 entitled “Mengintip AIDS di Pantai Bali” (“Peeking at AIDS on Bali's Beaches”), with quite a different approach to the situation. This

article, which was written a year before Hop's death, mostly focused on the phenomenon of male sex workers serving male clients (known as MSM) along Kuta Beach.

In response to the increase of HIV cases in Bali, the Citra Usadha Indonesia Foundation (YCUI) conducted pre-intervention and intervention research in key groups (or high risk groups) at that time: gays, shemale, female sex workers and MSM sex workers. The observation and research was carried out from 1989 to 1992.

Made Efo was the researcher and program coordinator. Armed with training from Dede Oetomo, the founder of Gaya Nusantara (the first LGBTQ organisation in Indonesia), Efo tried to develop educational content and the right approach for the gay, shemale and MSM community.

The first two years of the project were spent getting to know the culture and customs of the community. Efo used the snowballing method to gather community members in Bali. Previously, there was only one gay group that had frequent correspondence with Dede Oetomo and Gaya Nusantara (this group was coordinated by Ketut Yasa, the founder of YGD), and one shemale group assisted by Mami Sisca in Denpasar, "Initially these groups were very private, only willing to attend when recommended by friends and if only in party situations. "



Kontes Putri Kebaya tahun '93 (Dok. YGD, koleksi qiarchive.com)

Entertainment-filled gatherings were initiated by YCUI. Private places, such as the house of one of the community members, a shop, boarding house, or a hotel were chosen as venues to hold discussions. Efo used the birthdays of the community members to organize parties that also educated the community about HIV/AIDS.

"We worked with the community to elect three members who have a birthday every six months. We sponsor the birthday celebration, and we do counseling there. "

One of the venues that had been used as a gathering place several times was the Nusantara Hotel in Tuban, Badung. At YCUI events, there were several cross-dressing performers who worked as quarry laborers.

Based on Efo's observation, these people come to closed-door entertainment events like this as an opportunity to express themselves.

"Their clothes were fringed, home made from raffia similar to the grass cloth clothes from Papua," Efo described, "They use pupur (white powder) all over their bodies to cover the burnt skin and use whatever CDs they can find to dance together. "

Gaya Dewata organization (GD) was born from the HIV/AIDS intervention program conducted by YCUI in the GWL community. Due to increasing numbers of members and management, this group was founded on February 14, 1992 (before changing its legal status to a foundation on December 28, 1999)

This organization, apart from focusing on community outreach programs and VCT, is also active in providing safe spaces for the queer to showcase their talents.

In 1993, GD and YCUI held the Putri Kebaya contest, the first beauty contest for transgender women in Bali. In 1996, a similar contest was held by inviting the gay community, through the election of Raka Rai Gaya Dewata. This contest lasted until 2010. In both cases, their focus was on education about HIV / AIDS. Performances of cross dressers are also present at celebratory events such as welcoming participants of the Third Indonesian Gay and Lesbian Conference (KLGJ) in 1997 and commemorating AIDS Day every year.

At that time, there weren't many places where community members felt comfortable and safe to show their true self. 30-40 people attended every closed entertainment event designed by GD and YCUI. Queer people (especially those who identify as shemale) found a platform to show how they make-up, dress up, sing, and dance on stage. Amid media articles that tend to take a cynical view of queer bars and discos, they seized the party space as an opportunity to express themselves, network and educate themselves.

People began to know the term drag when its commercialisation arrived in the beginning of the 1990's. Koala Blue became one of the first

places who introduced this scene even though it did not last long. Hulu Café was born a few years later and organized routine drag shows. Since its set up, Hulu Café dared to promote itself as 'the only real gay bar in Bali'. They did shows three times a week with the concept of drag and cabaret. One of the regular shows that they held was Hulu Drag Idol, a special show to celebrate Indonesian divas and international pop icons. Visitors needed to make reservations for the show days in advance because of high demand. Hulu survived more than 10 years on Jalan Sahadewa, Legian before the building burnt down in 2008.

Arya, YGD's program manager, began 'going out' (attending shows at bars/night clubs actively) in 1999. Based on Arya's experience, this commercial scene started to get hyped up in the beginning of 2000 with the opening of the Q Bar and Kudos.

"For those who like to go out at night, there was already a set schedule. The show at Hulu Café starts at 10-12 P.M. People then move to Q Bar, where there are two shows at 12.30 and 1.30. After that, they move on to Kudos, where they have a show at 2.30 and close at 4 A.M. If they still want to hangout, usually they'll go to the Double Six bar which stays open until 7."

In 2005, Hulu Cafe changed its concept to be more open to the mass public. In 2009, the huge space of Q Bar was divided into 3 smaller bars, two of which were still popular



Kompetisi “Drag and High Heels” di Hulu Cafe circa ‘99 (Dok. YGD,

up until the pandemic. A while after Q Bar stopped operating, Kudos was closed. Some other investors tried their luck opening small bars, but none of them lasted.

The transition in the commercial scene happened in 2008-2009. Big stages turned into smaller platforms. Drag shows now occupied only one or two slots throughout the night, with other shows every 15 minutes. Visitors could spend more time at one place and didn’t have to change venues in order to watch shows until dawn.

Small competitions started to be held more regularly. The market for drag shows was expanding, not only in specific queer bars.

Spaces with a regular heterosexual market wanted to attract visitors by including a drag show in their program.

Consistent to Efo’s experience, Arya felt that the rise of drag culture in Bali started from small communities. They shared the same hobbies: make-up, lip sync, and character acting on stage. Mini competitions were held at social gatherings or community birthday parties just to enliven the event.

After the Q Bar, the amount of stages for drag expanded. The commission fee for each show also increased. The gay and trans-women community saw this as a good job to make a living.

Because the wages were higher, some male dancers actually switched to being drag queens. On the other side, this was also an opportunity for the trans-women to gain a source of income.

“For transwoman friends (because of existing discrimination), there were only 3 main job types available: beauty saloon workers, prostitutes and entertainers. It is hard for them to find a formal job except for those who are still role-changing (dressed as male in the day and as female in the night). When the transpuan community saw that being a drag queen could become a source of income and share their hidden talent, why not do it?” said Arya.

After seeing this opportunity, Bianca and Angelica, two senior drag queens who were active until the beginning of 2000, earnestly collected YGD volunteers who were interested in joining drag queen competitions for both the beauty contest and lip sync categories.

"If you want to be entertainers, don't do it half-heartedly," they said encouragingly to their friends. In an act of solidarity, they volunteered to hold joint exercises every time there was a competition. Bianca and Angelica asked each participant which song they will perform, gave suggestions about costumes to wear and tricks to perform on stage.

This tradition of mutual support is a legacy of the drag scene and was deeply felt by Meghan when Ayubie Tsunami approached her in the audition room. After her first competition in 2011, Meghan regularly visited Ayubie's boarding house to learn. She received a lot of direction and input from people who have been in the drag world for a long time.

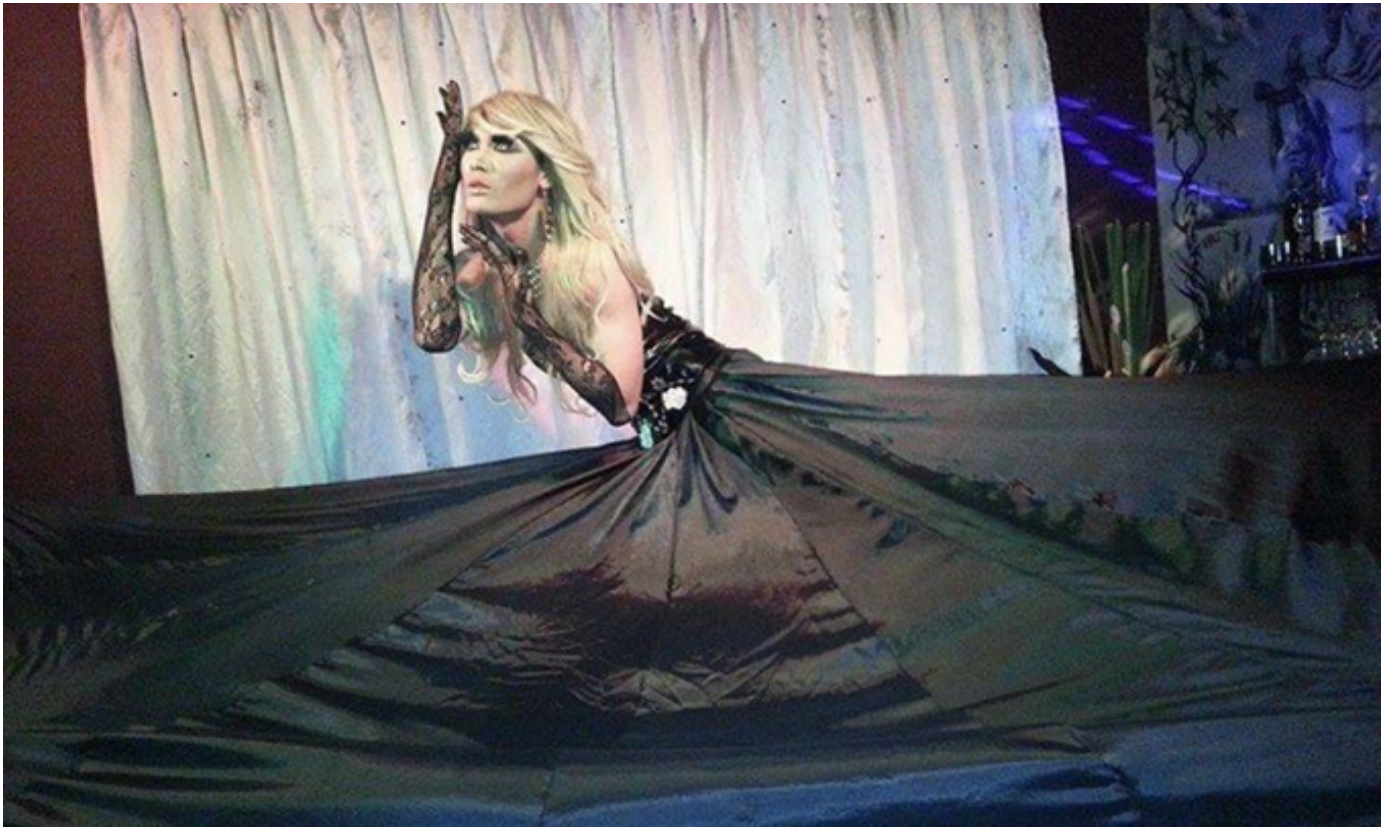
**“I was crying the whole way inside that pick up truck”**

Meghan Kimoralez Shark.

Her two last names, Kimoralez and Shark, were given to her by the manager of the bar where she competed. She saw the similarity between Meghan and Kimora Lee, a model and TV host in the USA. Shark was given because Meghan was able to conquer diverse characters acting and many other challenges, “I devoured all of that, they said. Just like a shark,” said Meghan.

After joining many competitions in 2011-2013, she started to perform shows with a regular schedule, moving from one bar to another over the years. Her journey was filled with inputs and criticism about song articulation, songs that clash with the theme, and dancing that was not in tune with the music.

“Meghan is persistent and always willing to learn. She accepts input with a big heart,” said one of the bar managers.



Meghan di Salah Satu Pementasannya (Dok. Pribadi Meghan)

Understanding drag shows and drag queens as characters is exactly the same as understanding other arts. Artists have to explore the various technical aspects before we decide on the specific artistic approach. Only then can they inject emotion and depth.

Meghan slowly works towards the technical side of things, including make-up and costume. After that, she begins to build her character. Her appearance is now more neat and presentable. The audience can feel her feelings in the songs. Humorous gestures are put in the right place. Just the right proportions of her character and charisma are shown, making her performances unforgettable.

However, there is this one time that Meghan will never forget.

In 2014, a few days before Nyepi, Meghan and her drag queen friends appeared at a bar with a bikini theme. Like other entertainment venues, this one was a closed bar. Visitors are required to show personal identification, and only those aged 18+ are allowed to enter.

The music continued until just before two in the morning. Suddenly, several village civil service officers entered, one by one, approaching the bar staff on duty. Performers who had finished performing were called and brought to the second floor. The drag queens were forced to remove their make-up while being lectured, "You guys have done pornography and porno-action."

Meghan and her friends felt the blame was too far-fetched. They were herded into the parking lot,

held like criminal suspects through the shocked crowd of bar-goers. In an open pick-up truck, they were transported to the local government office, "I was crying the entire way in that pick-up truck."

The officers remain firm with the charges of pornography and porno-action. How unfortunate, that time only their bar was raided. The neighboring bars looked calm and quiet. According to rumors, the officer had asked for more tribute for security services.

Security officers in Indonesia have a poor track record regarding the practice of extortion. The legitimization of Law Number 44 of 2008 concerning pornography was one of the legal tools used to carry out their bad intentions. They carried out raids on entertainment venues with these tool. Victims fell. They were asked for money after being humiliated. Entertainment workers have long been betrayed by power relations and stigma, and are still wronged by the state.

On a different day, Meghan witnessed her friend being splashed with chili water during a performance. Another friend was seen walking half naked with her head shaved in broad daylight. In those times, the drag queen community had to watch their movements very carefully. In their own spaces they aren't allowed to fully express themselves, not to mention when they are outside of work. Their bodies recorded the experience of 'falling, then being hit by a ladder ... 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.'

In 2013, a year before the raids, friends who were also from Jembrana introduced Meghan to YGD. In the same year, she joined as a volunteer. One of her motivations was to advocate for the communities in which she lives and works. She wanted them to understand LGBTQ rights.

"We have the same rights as everyone else. We are also God's creation."

Meghan is involved in HIV / AIDS intervention programs, the result of collaboration between YGD and the Bali Regional AIDS Commission (KPAD). Slowly, they approached the villages around where they worked. While carrying out VCT, Meghan and YGD field assistants also informed the people about the rights of queer people, especially trans women. They assured people in the area that the entertainment workers were not harmful to anyone and had the right to feel safe.

After several years, a mutual relationship developed between the village and the drag queen who worked as a YGD field facilitator. The banjar was involved in the education process about HIV / AIDS to the surrounding community and the drag queen friends who were absent from the other socialization events.

"Thank God, there are no raids anymore."



Meghan posing at Diskoria, the basecamp of Teman Baik and BBB

Before the pandemic, Meghan freelanced at three different bars. Sometimes, she took MC jobs at ceremonies and other events, which are formal or informal.

Apart from being active in YGD, Meghan is also involved in Bali Bersama Bisa (BBB) which was started by Teman Baik. There are 11 member communities with different backgrounds in this program: transgender, blind, bipolar, PLHIV, women fighting cancer, and others. The aim of this program is to eliminate stigma and

discrimination against vulnerable groups.

BBB's upcoming project is a suicide prevention hotline with counselors from member community representatives.

"Even though I'm not a national artist, at least

I feel like I'm an artist. I have achieved my goal of singing and being watched by people. "

Reflecting on her career journey, Meghan still has one big hope. After seeing several of her transgender friends who are still struggling financially, she wants to open a business together.

"In the future, I want to have my own platform to help my community friends. My current idea is to set up a wedding or event organizer business, involving only community friends in the whole process, starting from decoration to performance and catering."

## Reflection

"When given this assignment, I thought again about what kind of art should be promoted and why. Previously at a reading club about sexuality that I participated in, Hendri Yulius asked several questions about queer art:

What is queer art?

Is it limited to art addressing queer issues?

Is it limited to art produced by queer people?

What is the significance of attaching the label of 'queer' to art that fulfills one or two of these conditions?

Why not label it as just as 'art' which is equivalent to all other arts?

That was my first theoretical contact with the term queer art. The questions remained in my mind until follow-up questions emerged:

What is meant by 'equivalent'? Is it related to the issues discussed, or if the actors from the group are given enough space / opportunities? Personally, seeing the limitations of the available space / opportunities, I choose to talk about the second condition - even though both of them feel important and precarious at the moment.

Then I thought of Meghan and Erika. I got to know them from a queer zine project. At that time, I had a very limited grasp on these topics talking about queerness, drag culture and the arts. I decided to contact Hendri and discuss with him through Zoom. In our conversation, we discussed queer, queerness and drag culture in the art scene.

With a focus on creating art spaces, particularly for gender and sexual minorities,

my list of questions has grown. I admit that my mind at that time was still biased, with a tendency to place art as a practice in a whitecube, the exhibition space, a place that is distant from reality:

Are the things Meghan does on stage art?

What are the different forms of spaces and their artistic elements? What artistic works support it?

After interacting with the practitioners in this scene, I tried to adjust the bias in my mind. If you imagine art to be confined to the spectrum of what is pure and what is commercial, drag queens may be at the commercial extreme. If art is only questioned based on aesthetic symbols and their sublime meaning, the practice of drag queens may be seen as 'surfacial', entertainment, without deeper meaning.

However, art is not only formed from the extremes of references that I had always believed. Art will not be separated from the surrounding context that is built by its artists and practitioners. Observing Meghan's journey while understanding the drag culture in Bali, I realized that this art is present both on and off stage.

We see aesthetics in their body of art: movement, synchronization with the song,

make-up and costume design; things we can enjoy with the senses. The ability of Meghan and other drag queens to conceptualize the show is the artistic process. Venues, meetings, bars, and other places turn into spaces that make this process possible. Competitions, regeneration, and drag show programs involve strategic management and organization. The people behind the drag show, with limited space and vulnerability subjected by a moralist world, sharpens whiffs against the challenges that exist, turning them into strategies and hopes for sharing power.

This process taught me things that I could use to answer my own questions. Is it not the interdependence of figures, fields, and events that make similar types of work count as art?

Drag shows are the creation of a space to reclaim not only artistic expressions, but also personal expressions that have been silenced forcefully;

expressions which were survival strategies of its practitioners. Drag culture is not only born from the needs of capitalism and entertainment, but also bodies of artists from gender and sexual minorities who have journeyed long and hard to fight for their rights.

Perhaps we are already starting to hear about the emergence of queer writers, filmmakers, and artists. Not many, but their presence is quite encouraging. At the same time, spaces/ platforms with branding which emphasize their 'inclusive' or 'queer-friendly' nature are emerging. Claims that we have to test: are we inclusive only for the issues or are we also willing to share our space for expression with artists from gender and sexual minorities? Do we have a strategy to provide a safe space and to encourage the work of queer people in art?

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## ABOUT Denpasar 2020: REGENERATION

These writings are part of writing workshop which is a series of activities of Denpasar 2020 program: Regeneration. This program gives free course to 8 young people to participate in the series of workshop which focused on writing and creative review about artistic and cultural activities. These 6 weeks workshop includes broad topics, from art curatorship, citizen journalism, photography, review and critics to performing art. 4 invited mentors are well known culture and art figure in Bali and Indonesia, namely Anwar 'Jimpe' Rachman, Farah Wardani, Made Adnyana 'Ole', dan Syafiudin Vifick.

DenPasar is an annual program organized by CushCush Gallery (CCG), an alternative creative platform located in downtown Denpasar that dedicates itself to multidisciplinary collaboration by bridging various creative fields including arts and design.

